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RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1958.

Index numbers of retail prices for the September quarter of 1958 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases,
September Quarter, 1958.

City.	Aggregate All Groups.			All Groups, excluding Price Move- ments in Potatoes and Onions.		
	Index Number.	Increase from-		Index Number.	Increase from-	
		Sept. Qtr., 1957.	June Qtr., 1958.		Sept. Qtr., 1957.	June Qtr., 1958.
		%	%		%	%
Brisbane ..	2484	6.0	0.9	2508	6.2	0.6
Toowoomba ..	2440	3.3	0.0	2466	3.4	-0.1
Rockhampton ..	2456	3.5	0.8	2481	3.7	0.6
Townsville ..	2561	4.4	0.5	2594	4.5	0.6
Bundaberg ..	2465	5.8	1.0	2494	6.3	1.0
Weighted Average						
Five Towns ..	2483	5.5	0.8	2508	5.7	0.6
Warwick ..	2430	4.5	1.2	2454	5.0	1.1

The "C" Series index number for Brisbane in the September quarter, 1958, was 0.9 per cent. higher than in June quarter, 1958. This was the smallest increase since that for the corresponding September quarter in 1957, when the rise was only 0.3 per cent. However, the increase of 6.0 per cent. during the twelve months was well above the average of the last five years.

Increased food prices in Brisbane this quarter, accounted for more than half of the rise in the complete index. Beef prices rose substantially during the last month of the quarter, and, added to the increased potato prices, were chiefly responsible for the increase. During recent years, potato prices have been subject to wide and irregular fluctuations. Excluding the effect of potato and onion prices, the increase in the food and groceries group would have been only 0.7 per cent. instead of the 1.4 per cent. recorded for the complete group. Nevertheless, potato prices which increased at a greater rate than other items, were only normal for this period of the year just prior to the harvesting of the new spring crop.

House rents continued to record a further upward movement in Brisbane, although this was not nearly as pronounced as during the previous quarter when the main impact of the amended rent regulations became effective.

The remaining sections of the index, clothing and miscellaneous rose only slightly in all cities.

Changes in sections of the index are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1958.

City.	Food and Groceries.			Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1958.		From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1958.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1958.
	A	A	B				
Brisbane ..	229.4	1.4	0.7	300.7	0.2	142.5	0.4
Toowoomba	241.5	-0.1	-0.5	304.6	0.1	141.8	0.5
Rockhampton	208.2	0.7	0.1	294.6	0.1	155.4	2.4
Townsville	206.0	0.9	1.1	295.7	0.2	154.4	0.6
Bundaberg	219.4	0.7	0.6	301.8	0.1	141.6	0.5
Warwick ..	233.3	0.5	0.3	304.8	0.0	146.4	0.4

Food and Groceries.

The food and grocery section (including potatoes and onions) increased in all cities except Toowoomba, where there was a slight decrease. Beef prices rose considerably in Brisbane, Townsville, and Bundaberg, and to a lesser extent in Rockhampton and Warwick but remained practically unchanged in Toowoomba. Mutton prices decreased in Brisbane and Warwick but increased in the other four cities. Pork rose in Brisbane, did not alter in Townsville and decreased in the other four cities. Potato prices increased in all cities except Townsville. Other items to increase in all cities were, butter, cheese, condensed milk, tea, and dried fruits while prices of eggs, bread, flour, onions and bacon decreased.

Clothing and Footwear.

There was no change in this section of the index in Warwick while the remaining cities advanced only slightly. Brisbane and Townsville each registered the highest increase of 0.2 per cent. Prices of men's and children's wear showed a slight upward movement while in women's wear the movement was downward.

Miscellaneous.

This group recorded a steady rise in all cities ranging from 0.4 per cent. in Brisbane and Warwick to 2.4 per cent. in Rockhampton. Tobacco prices increased in all cities and in Rockhampton the price of gas also increased.

Rent (4 and 5 roomed houses).

The rent index increased in Warwick, 10.3 per cent., Bundaberg, 6.6 per cent., Brisbane, 1.7 per cent., Rockhampton, 0.9 per cent., and remained unchanged elsewhere.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

The Commonwealth industrial authority suspended automatic ("cost of living") adjustments after the adjustment which operated from the beginning of the first pay-period in August, 1953. Since that date, adjustments to the basic wages have been made from time to time, often on special applications, both by the Commonwealth and State industrial authorities. Particulars of such adjustments have been given in previous issues of this bulletin. At present, the New South Wales basic wage alone is being varied automatically with movements of the index numbers, while in Queensland and Western Australia, the State Industrial Courts have usually varied the wage after the index numbers have been published.

Following publication of the index numbers for the September quarter, 1958, the Queensland State Industrial Court raised its basic wage by 2s. for males and 1s. 6d. for females. In Sydney, the "C" Series index number fell by 7 points, sufficient to cause an "automatic" downward adjustment of 1s. to both the male and female basic wages. In Western Australia the rates for Perth were increased by 1s. 2d. for males and 9d. for females. In Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania there was no change.

Current basic wage rates are given in the following table.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index.				Common-wealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.							
	June Qtr., 1958.		Sept. Qtr., 1958.		Males. ^a		Males.		Females.		Date of Operation. ^b			
	A	B	A	B										
					£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane	2462	2492	2484	2508	12	3	0	12	16	0	8	13	6	27. 10. 58
Sydney	2661	2676	2654	2671	13	8	0	13	13	0	10	4	6	Nov., 1958
Melbourne	2574	2581	2588	2597	13	0	0	13	3	0	9	17	0	Aug., 1956
Adelaide	2522	2537	2563	2577	12	16	0	12	16	0	9	12	0	26. 5. 58
Perth	2747	2753	2758	2764	13	1	0	13	13	5	8	17	9	27. 10. 58
Hobart	2712	2735	2727	2755	13	7	0	13	12	0	10	4	0	Aug., 1956

Note: A includes, and B excludes, price movements due to potatoes and onions.

^a Operative first pay-period beginning on or after 21st May, 1958. The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b Where dates are not quoted wage rates operate from beginning of first pay-period in month shown.

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The "C" Series Retail Price Index.

(Base for Each Section: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1958.	Year Ended Sept., 1958.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1957.	Dec., 1957.	March, 1958.	June, 1958.	Sept., 1958.
1. Aggregate - All Groups.								
Brisbane ..	863	2397	2432	2343	2371	2411	2462	2484
Toowoomba ..	851	2405	2425	2363	2389	2430	2439	2440
Rockhampton ..	861	2404	2425	2372	2389	2420	2436	2456
Townsville ..	912	2500	2527	2452	2480	2519	2547	2561
Bundaberg ..	841	2382	2416	2329	2356	2402	2440	2465
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	2404	2437	2353	2380	2420	2464	2483
Warwick ..	822	2364	2390	2326	2351	2378	2401	2430
2. All Groups EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane ..	863	2422	2459	2362	2402	2432	2492	2508
Toowoomba ..	851	2431	2451	2385	2419	2450	2468	2466
Rockhampton ..	861	2430	2452	2392	2422	2440	2465	2481
Townsville ..	912	2530	2558	2482	2517	2543	2578	2594
Bundaberg ..	841	2406	2443	2347	2387	2420	2469	2494
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	2430	2464	2373	2412	2441	2493	2508
Warwick ..	822	2385	2414	2338	2377	2396	2427	2454
3. Food and Groceries.								
Brisbane ..	856	2723	2770	2631	2689	2788	2782	2820
Toowoomba ..	814	2740	2771	2654	2708	2813	2784	2780
Rockhampton ..	895	2701	2731	2638	2675	2751	2740	2758
Townsville ..	955	2823	2872	2728	2788	2881	2896	2922
Bundaberg ..	903	2775	2830	2665	2731	2841	2864	2884
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	2731	2776	2641	2697	2795	2789	2821
Warwick ..	846	2760	2790	2698	2732	2803	2806	2820
4. Food and Groceries EXCLUDING price movements of potatoes and onions (a).								
Brisbane ..	856	2796	2847	2684	2780	2851	2867	2888
Toowoomba ..	814	2810	2845	2713	2791	2871	2866	2852
Rockhampton ..	895	2771	2804	2691	2764	2806	2821	2825
Townsville ..	955	2905	2958	2805	2887	2946	2982	3015
Bundaberg ..	903	2842	2906	2711	2816	2895	2947	2965
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	2803	2852	2695	2788	2856	2874	2891
Warwick ..	846	2817	2857	2727	2807	2858	2877	2887
5. Clothing and Footwear.								
Brisbane ..	829	3287	3303	3259	3280	3293	3317	3322
Toowoomba ..	829	3324	3338	3298	3322	3325	3352	3354
Rockhampton ..	845	3310	3320	3293	3308	3308	3330	3334
Townsville ..	840	3296	3308	3277	3293	3296	3317	3324
Bundaberg ..	839	3340	3352	3320	3332	3339	3367	3371
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	831	3294	3309	3267	3288	3298	3322	3327
Warwick ..	825	3304	3324	3258	3306	3311	3340	3340

(a) Excluded as from September quarter, 1955.